

# **How to Hire a Planning Consultant**



**A Guide to Preparing a  
Request For Proposals**

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**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION  
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# **HOW TO HIRE A PLANNING CONSULTANT:**

## **A GUIDE TO PREPARING A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

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## INTRODUCTION

If your community is considering hiring a consultant to help develop a comprehensive plan to meet Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, this guide will be a useful resource. This document has been prepared as a general guide for developing a request for proposals. A "request for proposals" or "RFP" is an advertisement issued by a community to seek proposals to conduct a service or provide a product. The RFP outlines the services and products that a community wants.

- ✓ What is a request for proposals?
- ✓ How do you start the search for a consultant who fits your needs?
- ✓ What should you look for in hiring a consultant?
- ✓ How do you select a consultant who will produce a "Smart Growth" comprehensive plan that complies with Wisconsin law?

These questions, and more, will be answered in the following sections. The main purpose of this guide is to provide assistance to local governments that are considering hiring a consultant to assist them in preparing a comprehensive plan. This guide briefly discusses Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law and the implications for local governments. The guide focuses more closely on the role of planners, explores when and how to hire a planning consultant and provides guidance on preparing a request for proposals (RFP) for your community's comprehensive plan.

While all communities may benefit from this guide, it will be especially useful for smaller local governments that have few or no planning staff. Although the guide is specific to an RFP for a comprehensive plan, the guide may also be helpful with developing RFPs for other kinds of projects.

This guide is intended to be advisory only. Your community should consider seeking additional assistance from the resources identified in this guide. Several other guides for developing a comprehensive plan are available and will provide you valuable assistance.

Two guides have already been published including:

- A guide to the housing element entitled "*Housing Wisconsin: A guide to preparing the housing element of a local comprehensive plan*". (published March 2000)
- A guide to the transportation element entitled, "*Transportation Planning Resource Guide: A guide to preparing the transportation element of a local comprehensive plan*". (published March 2001)

Six more guides will be available soon including:

- A guide to the intergovernmental cooperation element (anticipated Summer 2001).
- A guide to the natural resources element entitled “*Natural Resources Planning Guide: A guide to preparing the natural resource element of a local comprehensive plan*”. This element guide is a separate guide for one-third of the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element (anticipated in Summer 2001).
- A guide to the agricultural element. This element guide is a separate guide for one-third of the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element (anticipated Summer 2001).
- A guide to the historical and cultural resources element. This element guide is a separate guide for one-third of the agricultural, natural and cultural resources element (anticipated Fall 2001).
- A guide to the economic development element (anticipated Fall 2001).
- An overall guide to comprehensive planning based on the provisions of Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning law (anticipated Fall 2001).

The two guides that are currently available can be downloaded from the OLIS website at [www.doa.state.wi.us/olis/complanning.asp](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/olis/complanning.asp) . You can request a copy of the guides by calling OLIS at 608-267-2707.

## BACKGROUND ON WISCONSIN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING LAW

In October 1999, the Wisconsin Legislature passed the most thorough planning legislation in state history in §66.1001, Wis. Stats.. The comprehensive planning law in Wisconsin was supported by a unique coalition of public and private interests and was passed with bi-partisan support. Why did this happen? The comprehensive planning law came about in response to the widely held view that state planning laws were outdated and inconsistent with the current needs of Wisconsin communities. After January 1, 2010, local governments must make local land use land use decisions, such as zoning changes, annexations, and subdivision plat approvals, consistent with its adopted comprehensive plan.

**TIP:** The Comprehensive Planning law is commonly referred to as the “Smart Growth” law.

### WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range, broad-spectrum and integral view of a community's past, present and future. It responds to and anticipates change and seeks to ensure preservation of desired community characteristics and appropriate growth. The comprehensive plan includes statements of the community's values, an inventory of the community's resources, an analysis of trends, an identification of issues, and a visionary yet realistic “road map” to achieve the future the community envisions. The planning process provides the community with an opportunity to involve its citizenry and coordinate local issues and concerns with neighboring jurisdictions.

### WHAT DOES THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING LAW DO?

The comprehensive planning law does several things. It outlines the required contents of the comprehensive plan and defines the required plan adoption procedures. An important provision of the law is that by year 2010, a community will need to base land use decisions on its adopted comprehensive plan. As part of the comprehensive planning law provisions, a grant program was created to provide financial assistance to communities to develop a comprehensive plan that meets the requirements of the new state statutes. Please see §16.965, Stats for the grant program statutes found in Appendix B.

**TIP:** For more specific details about the comprehensive planning law, refer to §66.1001, Stats. found in the Appendix A and B of this guide.

To briefly summarize, the comprehensive planning law:

- ✓ *Defines the minimum required contents of a Comprehensive Plan.* The law requires nine elements in a comprehensive plan. Each element has various required data and components. The nine elements include: issues and opportunities, housing, transportation, utilities and community facilities, agricultural, natural, and cultural resources, economic development, intergovernmental, land use, and implementation. The necessary level of detail in your community's plan to satisfy

each plan element requirement depends on the planning needs and issues in your community. For instance, your community may not have transit service, so this issue would not be dealt with in great detail.

- ✓ *Defines Procedures for Adopting a Comprehensive Plan.* Your community must adopt a set of procedures for public participation. In general, the development of these procedures occurs at the start of the planning process. Your public participation procedures must include opportunities for participation in every stage of the plan's preparation, including at least one publicly noticed, public hearing prior to plan adoption. Before a comprehensive plan under these statutes can take effect, your community must adopt the plan through a set of statutory procedures. Your community's plan commission recommends adoption of the plan (and any future plan amendments) to the elected body by resolution. The elected body, once the review process is complete, adopts an ordinance by majority vote of the elected body adopting the plan. Statutes also indicate, within the implementation element, that plans need to be updated at least every 10 years.

**Box One**  
**Helpful Hints: Community Involvement**

Public participation is critical to ensuring that land use policies and goals are both realistic and consistent with your community's vision.

If meaningful public participation is neglected, the public may fail to take ownership of the plan and support its provisions. This lack of knowledge and ownership can lead to difficulty in implementing the plan and potential legal issues may arise for the community when it uses the plan to make day-to-day land use decision-making. Keys to meaningful participation include:

- ❖ Engaging as many of the entire community's interests as possible in the development of the plan.
- ❖ Inviting interests from neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions, including local governments, regional and state agencies, school districts, and utilities in the coordination of planning issues.
- ❖ Seeking public participation through a variety of means, including community-wide meetings or open houses; community-wide surveys; citizen advisory committees; focus groups; internet resources; samples of in-depth interviews targeted to specific constituencies; newsletters, radio shows, and issue-oriented tours of key areas.
- ❖ Allowing enough time. People in Wisconsin communities are busy with work, families, and many other community activities. Allow the public plenty of opportunity to participate in the process.

- ✓ *Requires Consistency in Your Decision-making.* By January 1, 2010, all land use related actions including zoning approvals, amendments to ordinances and other



regulations must be consistent with your community's adopted comprehensive plan. What does consistency mean? By 2010, when your community wishes to approve a proposed zoning change, for example, your community will be required to base the zoning change on your adopted comprehensive plan. See the statutes in Appendix A for a list of specific land use actions that must be consistent with a comprehensive plan.

## **HOW ARE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IMPACTED BY THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING LAW?**

Under the comprehensive planning law, local governments control their own planning and land use decision-making. The law provides local governments with a basic framework and guidance to develop comprehensive plans. This will assist the community in making informed land use decisions. Plans prepared previously (under the "old laws") remain viable until January 1, 2010, however, after this date, communities will need to make land use related decisions based upon plans developed under the provisions in §66.1001, Stats..

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PLANNING AND WISCONSIN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING LAW**

***Question: Is planning and the local regulation of land use decisions illegal or anti-growth?***

No. Wisconsin statutes authorize communities to plan and conduct comprehensive planning. The comprehensive planning law does not contain policies that restrict growth or dictate the type of growth in your community. The comprehensive planning law requires local governments to estimate how fast they will grow, and then plan to accommodate growth in ways that limit negative impacts on land, utility costs, budget resources and other factors. Regulating land use is also legal and:

- ✓ Courts in the U.S. have consistently upheld the legality of land use regulation, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, since the early decades of the 20th century. Courts have also upheld the ability of local governments to use their plans as a basis for making regulatory decisions.
- ✓ The enforcement of land use regulations is justified under state "police powers" to prevent land uses that may threaten public safety, health and general welfare.

***Question: If our community adopts a comprehensive plan in compliance with Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, will we still have local land use control?***

Yes. Your community will have the same level of local land use control that it had prior to adopting the comprehensive plan.

- ✓ Adopting a comprehensive plan provides no additional zoning or decision-making powers to communities, and does not limit local powers already in place.
- ✓ The law did not change the implementation abilities of communities, such as zoning or annexation powers, nor did it change the relationship between towns, cities, villages, and counties.

***Question: If our community already has zoning or a subdivision ordinance do we still need to adopt a comprehensive plan?***

Yes. Your community will need a comprehensive plan in order to continue making land use related decisions according to the comprehensive planning statutes. Zoning and subdivision ordinances are not considered plans, however they are the tools that you use to implement your plan! Your community will need to review its zoning ordinance and other regulations to make sure the language is consistent with your comprehensive plan.

***Question: Will adopting a comprehensive plan that meets Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law requirements stop annexation?***

No. Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law does not address or change annexation laws. However, the law provides an opportunity for improved coordination and cooperation among neighbors through the development of a comprehensive plan. Governmental relations, annexation, and boundary agreements should be addressed in the intergovernmental cooperation element of your comprehensive plan.

***Question: Are there any real benefits from this comprehensive planning exercise?***

Yes. There are numerous, tangible benefits for your community. Here are a few:

- ✓ A concise and well-thought out plan will make it easier for your community to be proactive when reviewing development proposals rather than reacting to proposals without an idea of your community's wishes for the future.
- ✓ The planning process is an opportunity to learn and re-learn about the community, the citizens and its hopes and wishes for the future. Planning can help to resolve existing conflicts within the community and among neighboring communities and ease concerns in contentious issues such as those encountered in rezoning or conditional use permitting.
- ✓ The planning process can open up a new or rejuvenated conversation about land use, development, conservation and shared services. Another benefit is an opportunity to conduct a plan among multiple communities or "multi-jurisdictional" planning.
- ✓ Long term economic benefits to your community are a clear result of comprehensive planning and implementation of the plan. Land use decisions based upon a well thought out plan can help your community improve its efficiency in planning and providing for public services and infrastructure investments such as roadways, parks, sewer and stormwater improvements.



## WHAT PLANNERS DO

Planners carry out many types of services, including:

- ❖ Preparing background studies and surveys of the physical, social and economic aspects of a community.
- ❖ Developing a program for addressing community issues and citizen needs identified in studies and surveys.
- ❖ Preparing overall comprehensive plans, focused plans (such as an Openspace Plan), and site-specific, project plans (such as an industrial park project).
- ❖ Preparing specific planning studies on an area of concern such as downtown revitalization and brownfield recovery areas.
- ❖ Providing ongoing technical assistance such as zoning, ordinance, subdivision plat revisions and reviews.
- ❖ Guiding comprehensive land use and resource mapping programs.

Planners and related technical support professionals work for both public agencies and private consulting firms as well as non-profit organizations. When your community receives proposals from private, public and non-profit organizations for planning services, you are likely tapping a diverse mix of professionals with a range of motivations for what they do. For counties and regional planning commissions especially, communities should be aware that a variety of revenue sources including general tax levy, contract services, federal and state grants, membership fees or some combination of sources fund these public agencies. Even when your community receives no cost or low cost assistance from these agencies, communities should be aware that no services are truly free and that these providers may be influenced by the source of the funds they receive to support their organization.

When a planning consultant or other organization such as a regional planning commission works under contract for your community, most of the cost of developing a good comprehensive plan is measured in hours spent conducting the work. Professional planners usually estimate service costs on an hourly basis, and then multiply that cost with an estimate of the time it will take to complete items such as a survey of current land uses, create a range of population projections, facilitate an effective community visioning process, and other activities needed to complete a comprehensive plan.

## PUBLIC PLANNING AGENCIES

Regional Planning Commissions. Over the last three decades, Wisconsin's regional planning commissions (RPCs) have provided planning services and technical support for many of the existing local plans. RPCs cover the majority of the state, however, coverage varies across the state especially in south central areas of Wisconsin. While RPCs conduct their own planning on a regional level, they often provide various levels of planning assistance to counties and other local governments within the scope of their staffing levels and budget. Regional planning commissions depend on an annual patchwork quilt of funding from a variety of sources to maintain staffing levels and pay the rent. Funding sources include annual membership fees from county and municipal members; contracts with municipalities for the provision of planning services, grant applications, and other services; and specialized studies and data analysis funded by federal, state and private sources.

RPCs often compete with private sector planners to secure local and county planning contracts. Your RPC may respond to your request for qualifications or proposals. Even if your community does not contract with the RPC to develop your comprehensive plan, RPCs are a good source of information. In addition, your community should coordinate with the RPC to reduce conflicts and limit duplicative efforts. The comprehensive planning law requires communities to send a copy of the recommended draft and adopted comprehensive plan and any amendments to your area's regional planning commission where applicable.

County Planning. About one-quarter of Wisconsin counties have county planning departments. They handle a wide range of project-level and long-term planning, development and ordinance-related tasks. The daily planning needs can limit county planning staff capacity to gear-up for comprehensive planning under The comprehensive planning law . Some urban counties may have long-range planners on staff, but, even with additional resources from grants, they may find it difficult to add more planners to meet demand. Many Wisconsin counties are working closely with the various communities within the county to develop a comprehensive plan that covers all areas of the county. Counties, as with the RPCs, often compete with private sector planners to secure local planning contracts, however, this occurs less often due to the day-to-day tasks of county planning departments and limited number of staff.

## PRIVATE CONSULTANTS

While private sector planners share many of the same motivations as public and citizen planners, consultants must make a profit. This motivation can have advantages and disadvantages for community clients. When private consultants have more work, depending on the current labor market, they usually hire more staff. Another positive standpoint is that planners working for private firms are likely to carefully structure a project workplan and timeline based on local budget and other resources. Consultants generally have a good sense of the real dollar costs of getting your plan done. They are

<p><b>TIP:</b> Choose a consulting firm that has experience with your community's needs and size.</p>
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thinking as hard as your community's officials about what is in the contract for planning services. The downside of the dollar sign is that private sector planners may be less willing to "go the extra mile" without adding extra costs such as when your plan needs additional maps or public meetings. Extra work equals extra hours which means more dollars required to maintain that profitability focus.

## **Box Two**

### **Helpful Hints: Good Planning**

Once community officials and citizens have made a decision to begin the comprehensive plan, how do they proceed in such a way that results in good planning? Good planning practices involve, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Discussing how your community will respond proactively to issues (i.e., growth issues, service and infrastructure needs).
- ✓ Providing time for creative and community-oriented solutions rather than reacting to situations when they occur.
- ✓ Educating the community about the nature of the community and the changes that are affecting it.
- ✓ Engaging all points of view in the development of the plan.
- ✓ Thinking about what the community wants to maintain or change, challenging preconceived notions.
- ✓ Finding a voice and articulating community concerns.
- ✓ Using appropriate technology by creating tools and using language that local residents can understand and use.
- ✓ Establishing policies and setting attainable goals consistent with the community's vision.
- ✓ Implementing the goals and policies of the plan when making community decisions.
- ✓ Keeping the plan current and vibrant by updating it as often as possible, usually every 3-5 years, but thoroughly updating it at least every 10 years under the statutory provisions.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT HIRING A CONSULTANT**

***Question: Does our community really need consulting support? Can't we put together an adequate comprehensive plan on our own, without the experts and added cost?***

It depends. Local governments will need to carefully consider their ability to develop and adopt comprehensive plans with or without technical support from planners and other professionals.

- ❖ Your community may have planning and zoning staff that have not previously engaged in long-term planning activities and have focused their efforts on fulfilling day-to-day

activities such as zoning and building permitting. This daily workload can inhibit staff ability to provide an adequate amount of time and attention needed in developing a comprehensive plan.

- ❖ Citizens and local officials are experts on issues and broad trends affecting their communities, but often need assistance to find ways to promote the community's goals. A successful process includes public participation which should be maximized before, during and after comprehensive plan development. Planning consultants can provide this assistance to help communities in reaching their planning goals.

**TIP:** One reason your county may consider hiring a consultant is that some departments are immersed in daily tasks and do not have the time or extra staff to devote to a long-range, comprehensive planning project.

***Question: Are consultants expensive?***

Your community's perspective will influence this response entirely. The answer will depend on your community's budget constraints, expectations, existing data resources and planning needs. Some firms see their planning services as a "loss leader," a company service that is not profitable, but may help to build a long-term relationship with a community leading to more profitable work. This does not usually create a negative situation for either a community or a firm. Your community wants and needs the service, and a firm is going to try to do an exemplary job on your plan in order to win back your business in the future.

- ❖ Your community may find ways to make a comprehensive plan process more affordable. For instance, some communities cost-share by working on plans together which can lower the cost for consultants.
- ❖ Counties and RPCs provide for nominal fees and sometimes free land information data and planning resources that can be used by your community and your consultant in developing a plan.
- ❖ State grant money is available to financially assist communities with the development of a comprehensive plan. Please see Appendix B for statutes related to the Comprehensive Planning Grant Program.

***Question: Do consultants peddle the same plans from place to place?***

Generally, no however, there is a possibility that some consultants may try to do this.

- ❖ A well written RFP is recommended to avoid your community receiving poor service. Sometimes this tendency to copy plan contents, when it happens, is the result of planning service providers seeking to maximize profits or retain resources for their agency.
- ❖ Sometimes local governments may actually be the cause. Planners that work under contract may find that the price local governments are willing to pay for a comprehensive plan covers only a portion of the actual time and materials required to

conduct a good planning process and complete a good product. Consultants generally do try to minimize their costs, in ways such as streamlining data development, collection, organization, and presentation. But these sorts of efficiency measures must be balanced against the need to recognize the uniqueness of each community and each planning process.

- ❖ Consultants may employ a similar process of developing a plan between various communities, however, this is not the same as duplicating a plan or the policies and goals from another community. The consultant may suggest a similar planning process as a result of techniques that the consultant has found to work well in other communities.
- ❖ With several consultant proposal options offered through your community's RFP, your community can more effectively dictate the terms and prices.

***Question: Do consultants care about the quality of their work?***

Overall, yes. Nationally, studies of professional planners show their motivation for choosing planning as a career is to improve community decision-making and community quality of life. Generally, planners take great pride in their work, are dedicated to a career of community planning, and recognize that each community is unique.





# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## THEIR PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS

Once your community has determined its commitment, defined the project, and assessed its capacity, your community can decide to develop and send out a “Request for Qualifications” as a way to limit the number of consultants they will send the actual “Request for Proposals.” If your community knows how it would like to proceed without conducting an RFQ, it can certainly decide to go right into developing and sending out an RFP.

## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

An RFQ is a community’s request for a list of qualified consultants who have previously performed similar tasks in the past for other communities. Many types of private firms including environmental, landscape architecture and engineering firms as well as planning firms also provide comprehensive planning services. Gaining knowledge of firms which have previously developed comprehensive plans for similar sized communities gives your community a perspective on the process of hiring a consultant. Various consulting firms will provide your community with materials indicating their experience with other communities, successful projects, references, and staff information including the number and type of staff as well as their professional background. It will not be material specific to your comprehensive plan and your needs, however, this background material should help your community to understand the consultants’ depth of expertise in comprehensive planning.

TIP: Don’t confuse a Request for Qualifications with a Request for Quotes (for materials and equipment).

When should your community send out an RFQ?

- ✓ If your community does not know any planning consultants.
- ✓ If your community has never previously worked with planning consultants.

The process of developing an RFQ and receiving consultants’ responses may bring new planning ideas to your community as you move forward in the process. What are the benefits of an RFQ? An RFQ will permit your community to narrow down a list of qualified consultants and have better knowledge of qualified consulting firms. In addition, your community can begin to establish a long-term relationship with a planning firm. A long-term perspective will help your consultant understand and provide services to your community. At a minimum, when requesting an RFQ, a community should request a company profile and organizational chart, qualifications of key personnel, descriptions of comparable projects and a list of fees by employee classification.

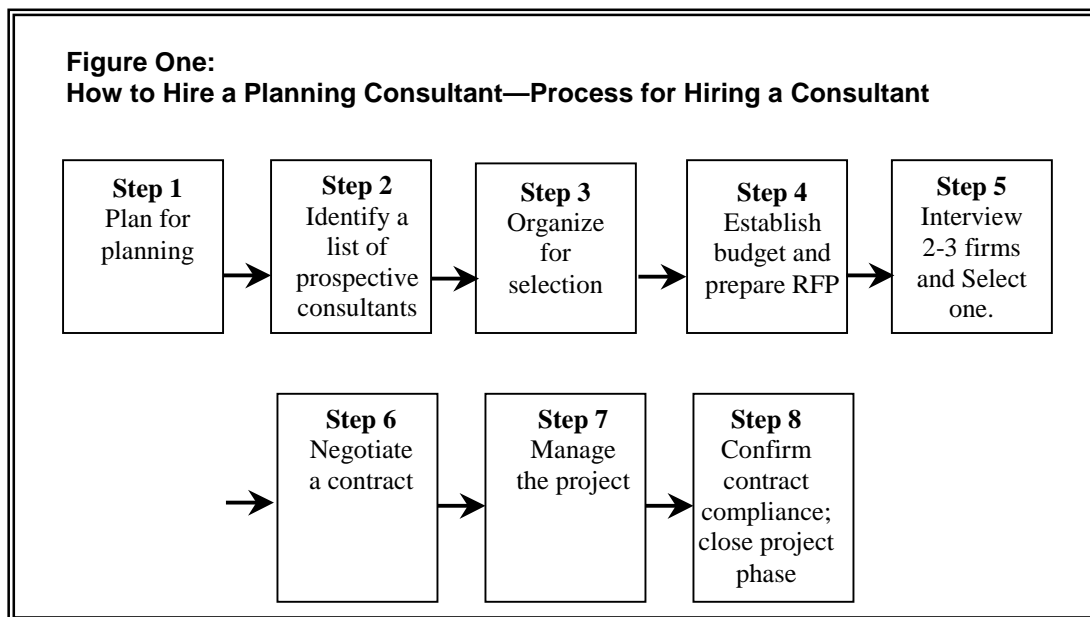
## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

A “Request for Proposals” or RFP is an advertisement by a community that seeks proposals for conducting a certain service or for providing a product. The RFP outlines the services and products that your community wants. It provides necessary background for consultants to review. What are the overall benefits of an RFP?

- ✓ It will help your community to become better prepared to select the best or most appropriate consultant for your community and avoid unanticipated problems along the way.
- ✓ It will help your community to focus on necessary tasks to meet statutory provisions and outline the specific tasks desired by your community.
- ✓ It will provide your community with insights, observations and approaches to better understand community issues.
- ✓ It will explain clearly to citizens and others why your community is seeking to prepare a comprehensive plan, what it wants to achieve, and the basic plan process it intends to follow.
- ✓ It will provide a rational and fair process for reviewing all submitted proposals, weigh the various options presented, including the fees, products, meetings, schedule and completion dates.

## **STEPS FOR HIRING A CONSULTANT**

When to hire a planning consultant can often be as difficult as deciding who to hire. Preparing a comprehensive plan takes time and effort by local governments and its citizenry to complete and then implement. As this guide suggests, a concisely written Request For Proposals will make the hiring process easier to accomplish. Before hiring a consultant, a community should do some homework before seeking professional assistance. Some communities may not have previously developed a plan or hired outside consultants for assistance planning services. Communities may not know of neighboring communities that have hired a planning consultant either. So, how do you start the search for a consultant that fits your needs? What should you look for in hiring one? There are several areas where your community will need to make decisions before starting the process of hiring a consultant.



## STEP 1: PLAN FOR HIRING A CONSULTANT.

### Confirming Leadership Commitment

A commitment from local leadership is critical for moving ahead with a comprehensive planning process. But, how can a community be sure it is ready to move ahead? Public input is important along the entire process from start to finish including generating this commitment. Using proposals from consultants to generate community interest and agreement about how to conduct a comprehensive plan is destined for failure or at least can throw your initiative off course (Dale 1998:18). Your community and its leadership should be prepared to commit to the time it takes to develop a plan.

### Defining the Project

If your community is undertaking a comprehensive planning process, the comprehensive planning law in §66.1001, Stats. provides local governments with the minimum requirements necessary to include within a comprehensive plan. Your community should carefully review these requirements and decide how to tailor your comprehensive plan to fit your community's financial resources and needs.

**TIP:** Contact OLIS, the UW-Ext. Land Use Education Center, or your county's community and resource development extension educator/agent if you have any questions about the comprehensive planning law.

*Planning cooperatively with your neighbors.* Your community will need to include neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions in the comprehensive planning process by inviting them into the process. This means inviting them to discuss various, mutual issues such as transportation and economic development, and bordering land uses and participate in the plan's development. Your community may want to consider hiring a consultant to evaluate the interrelationships of its neighboring communities and the consistency of plans and to provide a recommendation of options for the most efficient and practical planning approach. Your community may also want to consider developing a multi-jurisdictional

plan. For instance, an example of a multi-jurisdictional plan is a village and two adjacent towns developing a comprehensive plan together. Many communities are considering this approach especially through the comprehensive planning grant program. Like the multi-jurisdictional plan being developed for Portage County, a county can decide to prepare comprehensive plans for all governments within the county jurisdiction.

*Preparing a grant application.* Under the comprehensive planning law, state grants are available for the development of local plans. One of the first decisions your community should consider is whether to pursue a comprehensive planning grant. Depending on whether a local government is successfully awarded a grant can alter the comprehensive plan process, timeline, and its contents. All local governments need to understand the components of the law to make an educated decision about pursuing state grants. Consulting firms can assist local governments in preparing grant applications once a decision is made to go forward with an application. Financial incentives also exist in the planning grant program for multi-jurisdictional planning.

### **Assessing your capacity**

Prior to hiring a consultant, a local government should realistically assess local planning capacity. Here are a few scenarios and issues to consider.

*Scenario 1: No planning staff.* For many of Wisconsin's local governments, there is no professional planning capacity. While some communities have previously developed a plan through the plan commission, land use committee, or citizen advisory board, it is generally impractical to assume that any one of these commissions, committees or boards acting alone or together can prepare a comprehensive plan. People involved in these committees are usually committed to numerous activities such as serving on the County board, school board, church committees as well as their own family activities. If your community is considering using its plan commission or other plan advisory committee to complete the plan, it will be important to first assess the time commitment from the members.

Some communities may have a zoning administrator or building inspector on its staff, however, these individuals generally do not provide planning services for the community and are not experienced in long-term planning projects such as comprehensive planning. Ideally in these situations, where local planning capacity is lacking or insufficient, building local capacity may become a part of the comprehensive planning process either through educational and training programs or through a commitment to hire professional staff. Hiring outside assistance is a viable choice for developing a comprehensive plan.

For smaller communities without full-time planning staff, they may find the process is best accomplished by hiring a consultant to help steer the process outlined in the statutes, including garnering public participation, gathering and analyzing the appropriate data, reviewing other neighboring communities' plans, developing various plan alternatives to suit the desires of the community and preparing the plan document and implementation tools.

Scenario 2: One planner on staff. This planner's job is filled with the day-to-day business of the planning office. It is unrealistic to assume that a planner can take on a comprehensive planning process and produce a useful plan while still managing the planning department. This planner will add a great deal of assistance to a consultant's efforts in developing a plan and attendance at the plan's public meetings. The planner also may act as the project manager for the plan, tracking the project and meeting frequently with the consultant on the process and contract requirements.

**TIP:** By depending solely on a limited staff, the time to prepare a plan will increase and may negatively impact the effectiveness of your comprehensive plan.

Scenario 3: Three or more planners on staff. Many larger communities with planning staff are often in a position to develop a comprehensive plan through internal resources without hiring additional private assistance. Nonetheless, they also need to continue the day-to-day business of the planning office as well. Hiring a consultant expert in specific areas to assist staff is often an appropriate use of time and budget. Other larger communities hire a consultant to prepare and manage the entire comprehensive plan project due to internal staffing or other matters that are best suited to outside assistance. If your community is hiring outside assistance, this guide should be useful in setting a successful course.

**TIP:** Larger communities often hire consultants to assist in the plan process such digital map preparation and public participation, and also preparing implementation tools such as zoning ordinance revisions and design guidelines.

The following questions should help you establish the need for a planning consultant:

1. What is the issue, problem, or project that the plan commission must address?
2. What is the intended end-product or result?
3. Are there reasons aside from the new planning law that are determining a completion date?
4. Is it practical to hire additional permanent or temporary staff?
5. What is the estimated total cost of hiring additional staff compared to hiring a consultant?
6. Would hiring additional staff carry with it the possibility of a longer-term commitment than the current requirements justify?
7. Would hiring a consultant add objectivity, stature, or credibility to the result?
8. Is there political controversy connected with the project? If so, could the presence of a consultant help defuse it?
9. Does the project require a detached, objective, or innovative approach?

Answering this series of questions should lead the plan commission to one of three conclusions: 1) No additional assistance is necessary; 2) Some additional staff needs to be hired; or 3) Hire a consulting firm to do the work rather than increasing internal capacity.

## **STEP 2: IDENTIFY A LIST OF PROSPECTIVE CONSULTANTS.**

After the above decisions and assessments are made, the plan commission will need to identify a list of prospective consultants. One way to get a list of qualified consultants is to

send out a “Request for Qualifications” or RFQ. This can limit the number of consultants that the plan commission will send the “Request for Proposals.”

Identify consulting firms through previous experience with consultants, references from neighboring communities, or like communities around the State, a list of consultants from the Wisconsin chapter of the American Planning Association ([www.uwm.edu/Org/wapa/](http://www.uwm.edu/Org/wapa/)), American Planning Association’s Planning magazine’s consulting directory and the local phone directory.

The RFQ can be very brief. It should outline your communities intent, and could be sent to 20 or so firms from which you could choose to send the RFP to about 5 or 8 of them.

### **STEP 3: ORGANIZE FOR SELECTION.**

Under this step, there are five essential tasks: 1) Identify a project selection team; 2) Establish a decision-making process; 3) Decide on project management options; 4) Select criteria for choosing a consulting firm; and 5) Prepare a recruitment/publicity plan.

#### **Identify a project selection team**

It is highly recommended that the plan commission set up a “project selection team.” This team can be individuals from the plan commission but can also include other willing community volunteers. The individuals chosen for the project selection team should: 1) be people who will work with the selected consulting firm and depend on their work in the future, and 2) come from a variety of perspectives to ensure broad representation.

#### **Establish a decision-making process**

It is important that the planning committee and the project selection team establish a decision-making process for who participates in the selection process and more importantly, who makes the final selection. Will the project selection team make a recommendation to the plan commission? Will the final selection be made by the town board with a recommendation given to them by the plan commission? These are critical decisions in the overall process.

A community must maintain a professional relationship between itself and any future consultants. To minimize favoritism, the RFP should clearly describe the process used to select a consultant, including who will make the selection, the criteria for making the selection, and the time-line for making a decision. Page 20 of this guide will discuss this process and discuss various options for selection criteria. Your community should have an appointed committee (ie: a steering committee, your plan commission, or another appointed committee) prior to developing your RFP. This committee should be included as an important part of the review of the applications.

**TIP:** An RFP process should be completely open and unbiased.

Preparing an RFP is critical even if your community is considering contracting with a regional planning commission or county planning department to prepare your community’s comprehensive plan. Like a consulting firm, these public planning agencies should submit a formal response to the community’s RFP. This will benefit your community by better

understanding the public agencies' proposal for your plan, overall project timeline and anticipated products that it will deliver to your community. The RFP process will also benefit these agencies because the RFP assists them to understand your community needs, and to recommend a suitable approach and products before entering into the planning process.

### **Decide on project management options**

If your community decides to hire a planning consultant, it is essential that project management options are discussed and an individual is chosen to act as the primary contact person. The contact person is necessary for several reasons:

- ❖ To act as the primary contact point – the consultant needs to know who to contact if they have questions or to assist them in contacting other individuals in your community.
- ❖ To manage the flow of information on the project – between consultant and other staff and between consultant and the public/stakeholders.
- ❖ To supervise work done by in-house staff.
- ❖ To monitor tasks detailed in the work schedule.
- ❖ To maintain the meeting schedule with the consultant.
- ❖ To give consultant room to allow for innovation, creativity, and objectivity.
- ❖ To provide agency policy for internal review.

The contact person can be the town or village clerk or administrator, the head of a department, a standing committee of local government or an ad-hoc committee working through a standing committee.

RFP submittals may be evaluated on the following, or additional criteria: 1) Professional Qualifications; 2) Past Experience; 3) Proposed Work Plan; 4) Address Community Needs; 5) Innovation; 6) Knowledge of Applicable Wisconsin Statutes.

### **Select criteria for choosing a consulting firm**

Your team will need to decide how to select the consultant. The RFP must discuss the community's evaluation process that will be used to select a consulting firm from the submitted proposals. Then 2-3 firms will be asked to interview. After the interview a final selection process is necessary to choose the consulting firm with whom the community will work and from whom the community will get a comprehensive plan. This process should include how your community will examine proposals and the criteria for evaluation.

The following criteria should be considered in your selection process:

- ✓ Professional Qualifications. Consultants have varying levels of available staff and expertise. The names and titles and years of experience of staff members, including any sub-consultants assigned by the primary consultant to

TIP: Your community should reserve the right to approve all sub-consultants.



perform various planning services.

- ✓ Past Experience. Criteria may include but is not limited to: land use planning, comprehensive plan preparation, public participation strategies, marketing and public relation activities, real estate, historic preservation, geographic information system (GIS) capacity, rural design and architecture, recreation planning, transportation planning, plan implementation, land use controls and zoning code preparation.

TIP: Accessibility of the consultant's lead principal planner or project manager is critical. If accessibility is an issue, it may indicate that the consultant has too many projects for your community to receive appropriate attention.

- ✓ Proposed Work Plan. Your community should review the consultants' proposals for the project work plan, timeline, and approaches. Capacity to accomplish the work in the required time is often a critical issue for communities.

TIP: Past performances on similar contracts in terms of cost control, quality of work and compliance with performance schedules is critical.

- ✓ Address Community Needs. Does the consultant and the proposal effectively respond to your community's unique needs and concerns?

- ✓ Innovation. Does the consultant have a proven track record in shaping the project and can they provide new ideas that supplement the experience and expertise of the community and its staff and officials.

- ✓ Knowledge of Applicable Wisconsin Statutes. Overall knowledge of the State of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning "Smart Growth" law and its statutory requirements is critical. Other laws such as environmental laws, zoning and planning statutory authorities, and transportation requirements, such as TRANS 233, may also play an important role in your planning effort. Consulting firms with limited experience in Wisconsin should be able to clearly demonstrate their understanding of these requirements and any grant program requirements that may influence the project.

### **Prepare a recruitment/publicity plan**

Advertising the RFP is a critical step in reaching out to consultants. Getting the word out about your RFP can occur through various avenues: a press release for the local newspaper, an article for a community newsletter, a poster at the community center or the town hall, or a letter sent to specific consulting firms.

## **STEP 4: ESTABLISH THE BUDGET AND PREPARE THE RFP.**

Establishing the budget and defining the task can be the more difficult, time-consuming and contentious parts of this entire process. However, an adequate decision-making process and an agreed "plan for hiring a consultant" in place can help.

### **Budget for services**

Budgeting for the comprehensive plan and specifically for planning services needs attention. Your community needs to figure out how much money it is willing to spend on a

comprehensive plan. One way to think about budgeting for the comprehensive plan is similar to a large infrastructure project as a part of a capital improvements program. If you think of the plan as taking two to three years before you receive the final “plan” report, it is often much easier to budget for a \$25,000 project over a two to three year period than for one year.

#### **Figure out the cost**

As part of the process of deciding to prepare a comprehensive plan, the local government needs to figure out how much it wants to spend on this activity. However, you do not want to prepare an itemized budget of the plan process to give to the consultant.

TIP: Think of budgeting for the comprehensive plan like an infrastructure project that’s part of your capital improvements program.

The difference between a \$25,000 plan and a \$250,000 plan is the level of detail, the use of technical models, including mapping services that use geographic information systems, and the level of public participation. For the most part, complicated technical models are not necessary for a town comprehensive plan. In addition, mapping services often are readily available at the county or at the Regional Planning Commission. Finally, county extension educators, particularly the Community and Resource Development county educators/agents are trained to help with public participation processes. Thus, towns should be budgeting for their comprehensive plan at the low end of the range. The plan commission, the elected body, the general public and the private sector will use the comprehensive plan to guide decisions about future growth and development within the local government’s jurisdiction.

TIP: Figure out how much your community is willing to spend on this plan.

By making your budget known, consulting firms can specify what they can do for that amount of money. If you do not specify an amount, consulting firms will be reluctant to spend the time to prepare a response and/or you will receive proposals with a wide range of costs and services. Wildly different proposals are difficult to compare and evaluate. When consulting firms understand your budget, all the proposals should respond with a similar cost estimate making comparisons about the proposed services that any one firm can deliver that much easier.

TIP: In the RFP, you should specify how much you are willing to pay.

#### **Preparing the RFP**

Developing a Request for Proposals should focus on your community and its project, specific project needs and requirements, and the outcomes and expectations for the consultant. It should outline what the community can contribute in terms of time, facilities, data, and other pertinent information to help consultants gear their proposal to best suit your community.

##### Length

RFPs can be as short as 5 to 10 pages. Larger communities may have an RFP that is up to 25 pages. The length will not include attachments such as maps, drawings, and supporting documents.

##### Content

The general content of an RFP should include the following material:

- ❖ A title page with the name of the project and your community's contact information, including the community's contact person, mailing address, issuing department or group, telephone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail and website address(es).
- ❖ An introduction to your community's project that includes (a) basic information about the community and (b) a description of the comprehensive plan project.
- ❖ A brief overview of your community's history including its governance. [Examples: 5-member town board] and staff (2 part-time staff—a clerk and highway maintenance), and other private vendors (engineering and public works assistance by consultant X, road maintenance and zoning by county Y, etc.).].
- ❖ Scope of services (please see page 25 for more detail).
- ❖ Other studies, plans, inventories completed and/or adopted.
- ❖ Any specific labeling requirements for the submission package.
- ❖ An arranged, pre-proposal meeting (if desired) including the date, time and location of the meeting. This is an optional meeting for a community, but it can be used as a way to describe the project and be available to answer prospective consultant's questions. This meeting can also help to establish contacts and provide an opportunity to see the interested consultants.
- ❖ The beginning and deadline dates for proposal submissions by consultants.
- ❖ The types of deliverables your community is expecting the consultant to produce by the end of the contract.
- ❖ The community's evaluation process for selecting a consultant.
- ❖ Equal opportunity clause.
- ❖ Non-collusion affidavit.
- ❖ A statement indicating that your community shall not be liable for any costs incurred by a consultant or sub-consultant in responding to this RFP or for any costs associated with discussions required for clarification of items related to this proposal including any future interviews by your community.
- ❖ Attachments such as maps, drawings, and lists of on-going projects and studies in your community.

#### Program Description

The RFP should begin with a brief statement of why your community is engaged in this project. The introduction and program description should include the following items:

- ❖ A description of important community characteristics. (Examples: Predominantly rural,

farming community; a small village within commuting distance of larger metropolitan area; a regional center of business; a seasonal tourist destination; etc.)

- ❖ Local population figures and estimates for your community and your county of jurisdiction.
- ❖ The average percentage of annual growth your community has experienced since the 1990 Census.
- ❖ Special concerns or needs. (Examples: experiencing fast-paced growth but desire less; experiencing limited growth but desire more; farmland preservation issues; lack of affordable housing; highway expansion project expected; etc.)
- ❖ Other important community characteristics. (Examples: kettles and moraines; groundwater contamination; high incidence of Native American mounds; etc.)
- ❖ Current and previous planning efforts and a list of all existing plans and planning-related documents, such as comprehensive, land use, or master plans, capital improvement or facilities plans, transportation plans, and recreation plans.
- ❖ A listing of existing map and data resources including the format of the resources. Formatting details should include the digital and hard copies available, scale, and software used to prepare.
- ❖ Planning and zoning relationship with county, regional planning commission, and neighboring communities. (Examples: County-town zoning or town zoning or no zoning; Village A has extraterritorial zoning review in Town B; etc.).
- ❖ Zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, floodplain, shoreland zoning, etc. (List last updates, if applicable and describe authority of zoning in the community.)
- ❖ Your community's anticipated budget (or budget range) for the project.

TIP: Background information is important because it provides consultants with a solid understanding of the issues facing your community.

TIP: If your community has an existing master plan, you may wish to consider preparing your RFP to update this plan to meet the new comprehensive planning law. Updating an existing plan can reduce the time and cost to complete a comprehensive plan.

TIP: There may be potential advantages, such as cost savings, if your community uses the same consultant for both services or concurrently develops the comprehensive plan and other planning-related documents.

Your community may want to consider reviewing existing plans and updating these separate documents as part of the comprehensive plan process so that the documents are consistent with your comprehensive plan. Certain planning-related documents are required to be consistent with the comprehensive plan by the year 2010.

### Scope of Services

A basic list of services is outlined below.

- ❖ Data collection and analysis.

- ❖ Facilitating a visioning exercise and issues identification.
- ❖ Facilitation of goals and objectives based on vision and issues.
- ❖ Development and implementation of a public participation procedures/plan.
- ❖ Coordination and outreach efforts with other state, regional, and local governments and agencies in developing the comprehensive plan.
- ❖ Preparation of comprehensive plan document which includes nine elements as required under the comprehensive planning law.
- ❖ Preparation of a set of digital and hard copy maps detailing, at a minimum, the land use, public facilities, transportation, and environmental resources of the community for suitable for implementation of the plan for inclusion in the comprehensive plan document
- ❖ Print and distribute the comprehensive plan document.
- ❖ Review of plans at the local, state, county and regional planning commission level affecting the study area.
- ❖ Review of existing zoning and other types of ordinances and recommended changes to make them consistent with the provisions of the new comprehensive plan.
- ❖ Recommendations regarding adoption by your community of any land use control ordinances. Developing such an ordinance may or may not be a part of this contract.
- ❖ Attendance at meetings with staff and the public.
- ❖ Development of a plan adoption ordinance per §66.1001(4), Stats.

### Deliverables

Deliverables are the items your community would like to retain or receive as a result of the preparation of the comprehensive plan. Some examples of common deliverables include:

- ❖ Public participation materials, such as survey results, brochures, posters, etc.
- ❖ Data and maps gathered and developed during the plan process.
- ❖ Copies of the draft and final adopted plan, in hard (paper) copy and in digital (diskette, cd or other media for use with a computer) formats with appropriate software. The number of paper copies will change the cost of the project.
- ❖ Transportation, land-use, public facilities, environmental and other maps in both paper

**TIP:** The RFP should specifically state the minimum requirements and expectations you have for developing a comprehensive plan.

and digital formats suitable for use in CAD or GIS systems.

- ❖ Publication on the World Wide Web.

#### Other Requirements

Your community should consider requesting from consultants how they would achieve your scope of services. To accomplish this, your community should require the following:

- ❖ *Project Understanding.* A statement of the consultant's understanding of your community's comprehensive planning needs, based on the project objectives cited.
- ❖ *Overall Project Approach.* The RFP should request that the consultant identify their proposed approach to the project, including a detailed work program in narrative form. Graphics illustrating the proposed work program are encouraged. This work program can be the basis of the detailed Scope of Services Contract negotiated with the selected consultant. Require an organizational chart which includes all the consultant's project personnel, their responsibilities and company affiliations.
- ❖ *Mapping Approach.* The community should request detailed information on the mapping approach in the proposal submittal. In particular, digital mapping specifics should include the hardware and software, data sets, sources, and other metadata (details on the information collected and/or developed), projection, datum, etc.
- ❖ *Proposed Approach to Public Participation.* Your community may desire an innovative use of various media. Your community may request that the consultant describe methods they would use to promote public discussion, group decision making, public hearings, dissemination of information, etc.
- ❖ *Description of Special Experience.* Your community may want to ask for a description of the potential consultant's specialized experience in comprehensive planning for both incorporated cities and townships, particularly in Wisconsin.
- ❖ *Project Timeline.* Your community should ask for an estimated schedule for completing the project accompanied by a timeline in a graphics format.
- ❖ *Cost Proposal.* Although your community indicates what it is willing to spend on the project in the description, cost alternatives depending on data and mapping services can significantly change the project cost. Your community should specifically request the form of the cost estimate it wishes to receive from the consultants including time and materials or a fixed fee. Your community may find it difficult to compare cost estimates if they are not submitted in a consistent format. Depending on your community's evaluation process, you should also consider whether to request cost proposals to be submitted under separate cover.

TIP: Be aware of a firm's or an agency's agenda, focus, mandate and expertise and whether there is any conflict of interest.

Once your RFP is prepared, you need to send it to your list of prospective consultants identified in Step 2 as well as using your recruitment/publicity plan to get the word out.

## **STEP 5: INTERVIEW FIRMS AND SELECT ONE.**

At this point your community has decided to hire a planning consultant and has defined the scope of service. Now your community's interview team, which may consist of the local comprehensive plan committee, the planning commission, city council, village or town board, will need to interview a short list of consultants.

### **Interviewing short list of references**

From the review of applications, a list of qualified consultants should be established and invited to interview with your community and/or its selection committee. The criteria for establishing this interview list should include pertinent experience of the potential consultant and its staff, together with any feedback that may be requested from references cited by the potential consultant.

Prior to the interview you should request and contact the consultants' references. Two or three references should be sufficient. If you have available time and staff, it is often appropriate and useful to talk to elected and appointed officials in other communities that have used the consulting firms you have decided to interview. These discussions can provide your community with additional insight about the firm and how your community might establish a good working relationship with them. These discussions also might raise red flags for your community. If that happens, reconsider the firms you plan to interview. Below are some possible questions to ask of these references.

### **Interviewing planning consultants**

After you have identified two to three planning consultants to interview, it is important to conduct a thorough interview. Each interview should be conducted separately and each firm should understand the proposed work and your selection procedures, i.e., how you will make a decision. At the interview, the firm should demonstrate how it would:

- ✓ Present the plans and policies throughout the process to the public;
- ✓ Establish and convey mutual professional trust in dealing with other agencies and the public;
- ✓ Involve citizens in the planning process; and
- ✓ Perform the necessary work within a reasonable time (Source: Minnesota planning).

Recall Step 3 which established the decision-making process as to how the final selection would be made.

### **Consultant Evaluation and Selection**

Your community will need to determine how it will notify the consultant applicants of the final rankings. See the Score Sheet for Reviewing Consultant Proposals located in the Appendix. Rather than identifying "a winner", your community may wish to rank the consultants and proceed with negotiating a contract (see Step 6 below). If negotiations are not successful, your community has then a procedure for negotiating with the next ranked consultant.



### **Box Three: Interviewing Consultants**

#### **Questions for References**

- Did those communities have problems similar to those of your community?
- If so, what approach was taken? What were the results?
- Was the community satisfied with the consultant's work?
- Was the consultant successful in engaging the public in the comprehensive planning process?
- Was the project completed in the specified time frame? Did the project costs overrun the preliminary budget?

#### **Questions When Examining Samples of Work**

- Are the final reports precise and understandable?
- Do they provide material that is both interesting and useful to the community?
- Does the material provide a continuing guide for a community as it carries out a plan

#### **Questions for the Interview**

- What is the consultant's current workload?
- How would this project fit in to their current workload?
- Who would work on the project?
- What are the credentials of the project manager and other key participants?
- Would subcontractors be used?
- What are their credentials?

Source: Choosing a Consultant for Local Planning. c.1998. [www.mnplan.gov](http://www.mnplan.gov)

### **STEP 6: NEGOTIATE THE CONTRACT.**

After you have selected a consultant, you need to negotiate the contract and develop a work schedule. The contract should include the cost, method of invoicing, scheduling, definition of work products, and commitment of personnel. An important part of this process is reviewing the scope of services with the consultant. This is the time to negotiate any changes to the scope of services. If you hire a consultant without negotiating the scope of services, you may be disappointed in the outcomes, the project could go over budget if the scope of services changes, and the consultant can get frustrated if there is any ambiguity in it. Like any job that you hire out, the contract needs to provide enough detail so that all parties understand project expectations and outcomes. In addition, a contract needs to spell out all the responsibilities of the consultant.

Part of a good contract is to clarify what happens when the project goes over budget. As much as no one wants a project to go over budget, it makes good sense to include this aspect in a contract. A planning process can go over budget for many reasons, including increasing the scope of services, changing the consultants responsibilities, establishing a working relationship with the consultant (this might require more meetings than originally anticipated), turnover rates within the local government and the consulting firm, experience level, time needed to review drafts, and citizen involvement and education.

There are two general types of payment methods you can enter into with a consultant: fixed price or time and expense. For many RFPs the payment terms are specified as fixed price or

not to exceed amount. Either in the RFP or in the interview it is useful to make the consulting firm aware of how you will pay them. Often when particular milestones are reached a lump sum payment can be paid out. This offers another method to keep the project on track and continue to receive background reports or other aspects of the plan.

At this stage you also should develop a work schedule that is as detailed as possible. Once the consultant is given the signal to move ahead, the project manager at the local government needs to be able to keep track of tasks and keep the consultant on track. Realize that the work schedule, especially if they are prepared with tight time lines will inevitably go off-track. Be as realistic as possible with the consultant about the tasks identified throughout the comprehensive plan process.

### **STEP 7: MANAGE THE PROJECT.**

Project management is essential to hiring a consultant. Like other staff of a local government, project management and oversight are critical. A project manager is necessary to do the following activities:

- ❖ To act as the primary contact point – the consultant needs to know who to contact if they have questions or to assist them in contacting other individuals in your community.
- ❖ To manage the flow of information on the project – between consultant and other staff and between consultant and the public/stakeholders.
- ❖ To supervise work done by in-house staff.
- ❖ To monitor tasks detailed in the work schedule.
- ❖ To maintain the meeting schedule with the consultant.
- ❖ To give consultant room to allow for innovation, creativity, and objectivity.
- ❖ To provide agency policy for internal review.

The project manager can be the head of a department, a standing committee of local government or an ad-hoc committee working through a standing committee.

### **STEP 8: CONFIRM CONTRACT COMPLIANCE AND CLOSE PROJECT PHASE.**

As the process moves forward, the project manager and the plan commission (and local comprehensive planning committee) needs to evaluate the consultant's work. The consultant needs to know if their work complies with the contract or if revisions are necessary. Good communication with the consultant and continuous evaluation is essential throughout this process. Closing out the project means that your community is satisfied with the consultant's work and the local government has reviewed all bills and has processed all payments to the consultant.

## WHO CAN HELP YOU PREPARE YOUR RFP?

There are many organizations and resources available to assist a local government to prepare a Request for proposals.

### Community Resources

- ✓ Citizens. Citizens are experts on the issues and broader trends affecting their communities. Public participation should be maximized before, during, and after comprehensive plan development through participation. Citizens offer local perspectives and opinions that provide a non-technical focus for some of the key issues addressed in the planning process.
- ✓ Local Officials. Elected and appointed officials provide leadership for a fair, open planning process, and one that recognizes public and private interests, and that balances community development needs with conservation needs. The appointment of a diverse comprehensive plan committee representative of the local community is a critical element of this leadership role.
- ✓ Local Comprehensive Plan Committee or Plan Commission. Roles played by this local committee include sponsoring the planning process for your community, putting in motion the community's public participation plan adopted by the local board, and ensuring that as many points of view as possible are expressed.

### Government agencies

Government agencies may have a local service mandate or motive; however, their expertise may be limited to one specific field.

- ✓ Federal government agencies. Agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, may be able to assist a local government. Because each agency is specialized, the ability for any one agency to help you produce a comprehensive RFP probably will not be realized.
- ✓ State government agencies. State level of government may also be helpful. However, like federal government agencies, state agency staff may only have expertise in a specific field and their mandate might be to only focus on that aspect of the plan.
- ✓ Regional agencies. Depending on your area, your Regional Planning Commission may be a helpful resource. However, if they also function as planning consultants, there could be a conflict of interest in assisting a local government with an RFP.
- ✓ County level agencies. and specifically for those counties that have zoning and planning offices, the planning staff should be helpful in defining an RFP. The advantage with getting help at the county level is you may have a good working relationship with the staff, they are aware of local issues, and they want to see you succeed. They may encourage cooperative planning if you had not considered that strategy.

## **Colleges and Universities**

The University of Wisconsin system has 25 two and four year colleges and universities scattered throughout the state. Part of the mission for all these campuses is to provide local services within their community. These campuses are a source of information from their libraries to the professors and academic staff who can help you with a variety of issues. While the professors and staff within these departments can assist communities with very specific education, their focus is often on research. They do not compete with firms to do planning.

## **UW Cooperative Extension County-Based Faculty**

UW Cooperative Extension faculty working at the county level seek to improve the quality of local decisions by providing public, private and non-profit clients with information, targeted research results, and process support. They get involved in local plan development and implementation by functioning as conveners, facilitators, teachers and skilled researchers. County faculty members are supported by campus-based specialists with a diverse range of skills, knowledge and research capacities. UW Cooperative Extension faculty providing educational support for local planning are most often found in two county programs - Community Resource Development and/or Agriculture and Natural Resources. These programs are found in most counties around the state. UW Cooperative Extension faculty working in counties around the state can provide applied education in support of RFP development and comprehensive planning, but this in no way substitutes for professional and technical support needed to complete local comprehensive plans.

## **Private Consulting Firms**

Consulting firms offer a wide range of services to municipalities and counties, many of which are strongly connected with the content of comprehensive plans and plan implementation. Many firms can provide both planning and engineering services. But if the firm doing the planning also provides engineering services, it raises ethical concerns and whether the community has the necessary information to evaluate and choose a good consultant. Public and private planning service providers are guilty of offering "sample" RFPs that tend to reinforce their own strengths as a provider.

## **Other Organizations**

There are many organizations that can act to educate your community on various planning issues. The American Planning Association has a website that is full of information to download or purchase. If your community becomes a member, it has access to a research office that can pull together a report on an issue of importance to your community. The Plan Commissioner's Journal also on the web, has lots of useful articles and information on planning. Most of the information is geared towards plan commission members. 1000 Friends of Wisconsin has a website that is useful, especially related to smart growth and comprehensive planning. The Wisconsin Towns Association and the League of Municipalities can also provide assistance through staff and their websites. The EPA has useful websites: Environmental Planning for Small communities; Community Based Environmental Protection.

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## **APPENDICES**

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STATUTES**

Section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes

Comprehensive planning.

(1) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) “Comprehensive plan” means:

1. For a county, a development plan that is prepared or amended under s. 59.69(2) or (3).
2. For a city or a village, or for a town that exercises village powers under s. 60.22 (3), a master plan that is adopted or amended under s. 62.23 (2) or (3).
3. For a regional planning commission, a master plan that is adopted or amended under s. 66.0309 (8), (9) or (10).

(b) “Local governmental unit” means a city, village, town, county or regional planning commission that may adopt, prepare or amend a comprehensive plan.

(2) CONTENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. A comprehensive plan shall contain all of the following elements:

(a) Issues and opportunities element. Background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local governmental unit.

(b) Housing element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the age, structural, value and occupancy characteristics of the local governmental unit’s housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs, policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental unit’s existing housing stock.

(c) Transportation element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element shall compare



the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the local governmental unit by function and incorporate state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the local governmental unit.

(d) Utilities and community facilities element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the local governmental unit, shall include an approximate timetable that forecasts the need in the local governmental unit to expand or rehabilitate existing utilities and facilities or to create new utilities and facilities and shall assess future needs for government services in the local governmental unit that are related to such utilities and facilities.

(e) Agricultural, natural and cultural resources element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources, parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

(f) Economic development element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

(g) Intergovernmental cooperation element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307 or

66.0309. The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

(h) Land–use element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land–use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5–year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

(i) Implementation element. A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, sign regulations, erosion and storm water control ordinances, historic preservation ordinances, site plan regulations, design review ordinances, building codes, mechanical codes, housing codes, sanitary codes or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in pars. (a) to (h). The element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit’s progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

(3) ACTIONS, PROCEDURES THAT MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLANS. Beginning on January 1, 2010, any program or action of a local governmental unit that affects land use shall be consistent with that local governmental unit’s comprehensive plan, including all of the following:

- a. Municipal incorporation procedures under s. 66.0201, 66.0203 or 66.0215.
- b. Annexation procedures under s. 66.0217, 66.0219, or 66.0223.
- c. Cooperative boundary agreements entered into under s. 66.0307.
- d. Consolidation of territory under s. 66.0229.
- e. Detachment of territory under s. 66.0227.
- f. Municipal boundary agreements fixed by judgment under s. 66.0225.
- g. Official mapping established or amended under s. 62.23 (6).
- h. Local subdivision regulation under s. 236.45 or 236.46.

- i. Extraterritorial plat review within a city's or village's extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction, as is defined in s. 236.02 (5).
- j. County zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.69.
- k. City or village zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 62.23 (7).
- l. Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62.
- m. An improvement of a transportation facility that is undertaken under s. 84.185.
- n. Agricultural preservation plans that are prepared or revised under subch. IV of chapter 91.
- o. Impact fee ordinances that are enacted or amended under s. 66.0617.
- p. Land acquisition for recreational lands and parks under s. 23.09 (20).
- q. Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands under s. 59.692, 61.351 or 62.231.
- r. Construction site erosion control and storm water management zoning under s. 59.693, 61.354 or 62.234.
- s. Any other ordinance, plan or regulation of a local governmental unit that relates to land use.

(4) **PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTING COMPREHENSIVE PLANS.** A local governmental unit shall comply with all of the following before its comprehensive plan may take effect:

(a) The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for wide distribution of proposed, alternative or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.

(b) The plan commission or other body of a local governmental unit that is authorized to prepare or amend a comprehensive plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the plan commission or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan. One copy of an adopted comprehensive plan, or of an amendment to such a plan, shall be sent to all of the following:

- 1) Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the local governmental unit.
- 2) The clerk of every local governmental unit that is adjacent to the local governmental unit which is the subject of the plan that is adopted or amended as described in par. (b) (intro.).
- 3) The Wisconsin Land Council.
- 4) After September 1, 2003, the department of administration.
- 5) The regional planning commission in which the local governmental unit is located.
- 6) The public library that serves the area in which the local governmental unit is located.

(c) No comprehensive plan that is recommended for adoption or amendment under par. (b) may take effect until the local governmental unit enacts an ordinance that adopts the plan or

amendment. The local governmental unit may not enact an ordinance under this paragraph unless the comprehensive plan contains all of the elements specified in sub. (2). An ordinance may be enacted under this paragraph only by a majority vote of the members elect, as defined in s. 59.001 (2m), of the governing body. An ordinance that is enacted under this paragraph, and the plan to which it relates, shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified under par. (b).

(d) No local governmental unit may enact an ordinance under par. (c) unless the local governmental unit holds at least one public hearing at which the proposed ordinance is discussed. That hearing must be preceded by a class 1 notice under ch. 985 that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The local governmental unit may also provide notice of the hearing by any other means it considers appropriate. The class 1 notice shall contain at least the following information:

- 1) The date, time and place of the hearing.
- 2) A summary, which may include a map, of the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment to such a plan.
- 3) The name of an individual employed by the local governmental unit who may provide additional information regarding the proposed ordinance.
- 4) Information relating to where and when the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment to such a plan may be inspected before the hearing, and how a copy of the plan or amendment may be obtained.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING GRANT STATUTES**

Section 16.965, Wis. Stats.

Planning grants to local governmental units.

**1)** In this section:

(a) “Local governmental unit” means a county, city, village, town or regional planning commission.

(b) “Smart growth area” means an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.

**(2)** From the appropriation under s. 20.505 (1) (cm), the department may provide grants to local governmental units to be used to finance the cost of planning activities, including contracting for planning consultant services, public planning sessions and other planning outreach and educational activities, or for the purchase of computerized planning data, planning software or the hardware required to utilize that data or software. The department shall require any local governmental unit that receives a grant under this section to finance a percentage of the cost of the product or service to be funded by the grant from the resources of the local governmental unit. The department shall determine the percentage of the cost to be funded by a local governmental unit based on the number of applications for grants and the availability of funding to finance grants for the fiscal year in which grants are to be provided. A local governmental unit that desires to receive a grant under this subsection shall file an application with the department. The application shall contain a complete statement of the expenditures proposed to be made for the purposes of the grant. No local governmental unit is eligible to receive a grant under this subsection unless the local governmental unit agrees to utilize the grant to finance planning for all of the purposes specified in s. 66.1001(2).

**(3)** Prior to awarding a grant to a local governmental unit under sub. (2), the department shall forward a statement of the expenditures proposed to be made under the grant to the Wisconsin land council for its written approval. The council may approve or disapprove any proposed grant.

**(4)** In determining whether to approve a proposed grant, preference shall be accorded to applications of local governmental units that contain all of the following elements:

(a) Planning efforts that address the interests of overlapping or neighboring jurisdictions.

(b) Planning efforts that contain a specific description of the means by which all of the following local, comprehensive planning goals will be achieved:

1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.

2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.
7. Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
8. Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.
10. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
11. Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
14. Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

(c) Planning efforts that identify smart growth areas.

(d) Planning efforts, including subsequent updates and amendments, that include development of implementing ordinances, including ordinances pertaining to zoning, subdivisions and land division.

(e) Planning efforts for which completion is contemplated within 30 months of the date on which a grant would be awarded.

(f) Planning efforts that provide opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process.

(5) The Wisconsin land council may promulgate rules specifying the methodology whereby precedence will be accorded to applications in awarding grants under sub. (2).

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SMALL COMMUNITY RFP EXAMPLE**

#### **Request For Proposal Town of Rolling Hills, Wisconsin Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan JULY 2001**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Rolling Hills, Wisconsin is issuing this request for proposal (RFP) to obtain written proposals from consultants who are interested in assisting the Town of Rolling Hills, Wisconsin in preparing a detailed Comprehensive Plan incorporating all of the elements of the recently enacted "The Comprehensive Planning " legislation. The following sections of this document provide additional introductory information, describe the general scope of work for the study, set forth the proposal requirements and outline the consultant selection procedures.

#### **TOWN OF ROLLING HILLS BACKGROUND**

The Town of Rolling Hills, founded in 1902, is primarily rural in nature with scatter farm and rural residences. The population is 1,350 persons. The heavily-wooded Town is surrounded on two sides by the City of Songbirds and Lake Maria. The Town also borders Hwy. Z, a significant transportation route for tourism, commercial and residential traffic. An active rail line runs through the Town's western edge. The Town, which is essentially undeveloped, presents significant development potential given its extremely desirable location near the lake and city and the beauty of the Town. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources manages about 100 acres in the town for a nature preserve which is also used for public hunting. There are a number of historically-significant agricultural structures in the Town which have been of concern for potential preservation efforts. The Town has Village Powers and has an existing subdivision ordinance. The Town is considering developing a town zoning ordinance. The County does not have zoning for the Town other than shoreland/floodplain ordinances. The Town has a part-time clerk/treasurer, an engineering consultant on retainer for public works projects including road improvements and stormwater issues, and is governed by a five person elected Town Board. The Town has appointed a 7 member Plan Commission to work with the consultant to develop this comprehensive plan. Many digital mapping resources are available through the County which the Town participates in funding.

#### **CONTACT PERSON**

Questions concerning the RFP should be directed to:

Mr. Jim Smith, Town Board Chair  
Rolling Hills Town Hall  
W5144 S810 Shoreline Road  
Songbirds, WI 5555  
Telephone: 555.555.0000

## **GENERAL SCOPE OF WORK**

**I. Plan Elements.** The Comprehensive Plan must use a 20 year planning period and incorporate all of the following elements as required by Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Planning legislation:

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation Plan (all modes)
- Utilities and Community
- Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

Special areas of concern for the Town include:

- ✓ Agricultural Preservation, including rural character
- ✓ Historic Preservation of barns, other buildings, and landmarks
- ✓ Lake front development and edge development issues
- ✓ Erosion and Stormwater management issues
- ✓ Transportation (roads, elderly transit service, trails, rail)
- ✓ Intergovernmental cooperation (County and adjoining communities, Regional planning Commission, state agencies)
- ✓ Tourism issues, recreation and parks

**II. Public participation.** The consultant must propose a specific plan for citizen participation in the process as well as describe how other interested parties will be included in the public participation process.

**III. Project Cost.** The project cost should not exceed \$25,000 for the preparation of the comprehensive plan including all data development and materials, meetings costs and deliverables.

**IV. Additional items the proposal should include are:**

- ✓ Review existing subdivision ordinances, recommend changes to fully integrate these with the Town's new Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Review of the County zoning districts and zoning map, provide a review of process to develop a town zoning ordinance including efforts to coordinate with the County.
- ✓ Describe AutoCad and other digital mapping capabilities and what would be provided to the Town of Rolling Hills
- ✓ Provide grant application support for State of Wisconsin's Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning grants
- ✓ Number of public meetings and timeline for plan progress



## **V. Deliverables**

- ✓ 20 paper copies of both the Draft and Final Comprehensive Plan documents including color maps
- ✓ Electronic format(s) of both the Draft and Final as specified by the Town and which become the property of the Town for future use and modification
- ✓ All other data and information that has been collected through the process in both digital and paper copies.
- ✓ All public participation materials including any survey results or other information.

## **PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

Each consultant should submit a formal proposal including the following items:

**I. Format.** The proposal should be submitted in written form. To the extent possible, items in the proposal should be placed in the same order as described in this document except that the estimated budget for the consulting services should be submitted separately in a separate envelope.

### **II. Contents**

- A work program describing the precise scope of work to be undertaken, including an outlined approach for community involvement and citizen participation.
- A detailed project time schedule.
- A proposed budget for the work effort including an outlines set of deliverables.
- A statement indicating the mechanisms proposed to be used to coordinate the work effort with the Town, including potential division of work.
- A description of the consultant's past involvement with the Comprehensive Planning Grants and identification of other alternative funding sources for this project.
- Designation of the key personnel who will work with the Town and their specific areas of responsibility for this Project. A statement indicating the professional and technical qualifications of the key persons who will be assigned to the project by the consultant. Resumes for key personnel should be included in the proposal as appendices. A list of any potential sub consultants who may be under contract through the Consultant to prepare this plan.
- A description of the consultant's prior planning-related experience involving the development of community wide plans other communities of similar size, composition and issues. Include a list of representative references for those projects.
- Disclosure of any competing interests or potential conflicts of interests in the Town including consultant's work for persons who own land or have development interests in the Town.

**III. Timeline.** The Town seeks to have a final version of the Comprehensive Plan ready for town adoption within 12 months after consultant is selected. Please indicate whether such a timeline is acceptable. With this final timeline in mind, provide a detailed breakout of the projected timeline for the various steps in the process, including but not limited to delivery of the following:

- citizen participation plan (draft and final)
- preparation of Comprehensive Planning grant application(s)

- initial discussion draft of Comprehensive Plan
- revised draft of Comprehensive Plan
- “Near final” Comprehensive Plan
- Review of existing zoning districts and map and recommendations to integrate with Comprehensive Plan
- Final Comprehensive Plan (once final revision have been made)

**IV. Directions for Submittal.** Consultants should submit twelve complete copies of the proposal and twelve copies of the estimated project budget. These materials must be received at the Town Hall by 12:00 Noon on July 31, 2001. Packages containing the proposal and any related material should be plainly marked on the outside in the following manner:

“PROPOSAL FOR THE TOWN OF ROLLING HILLS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN”

**V. Costs Incurred in Responding to this RFP.** The Town of Rolling Hills shall not be liable for any costs incurred by consultant in responding to this request for proposal.

**VI. Pre-Proposal Meetings.** There are no pre-proposal meetings pertaining to this RFP specifically scheduled at this time. Consultants who wish to discuss the proposed project should contact the Town Clerk.

#### **CONSULTANT QUALIFICATION EVALUATION**

Proposals will be evaluated on the overall qualifications, experience, and competence of the consultant and staff, prior experience in similar projects, experience in handling public relations and citizen involvement, a check of references, understanding of the project, proposed project approach, interview and proposed budget. The Plan Commission will review the applications and recommend a selected few proposals to the Town Board for their review. A selected few proposals may be asked to participate in an interview by the Town Board from which a consultant will be selected. Notification of proposal status will occur with two weeks of the deadline.

#### **CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCEDURES**

**I. Screening.** The Town shall review each proposal submitted. If possible, at least three consultants will be selected for follow-up interviews.

**II. Interviews.** The purpose of the interviews will be to allow the consultant to make a brief presentation to the Town and to allow for follow-up questions. It is anticipated that each consultant interview will be approximately 45 minutes, including presentation and question and answer period. Consultants selected for interviews will be advised by the Town as to the exact time and location of the interviews.

**III. Selection.** After conducting interviews, the Town may elect to negotiate a contract with a consultant containing a scope of work and a specific price for those services that best meets the needs of the Town. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all submittals, waive any irregularities, re-issue all or part of this RFP, and not award any contract, all at its discretion and without penalty.

**IV. Notification.** Consultants selected to interview will be apprised of the Town's ultimate determination in writing by the Town Clerk.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **CITY/TOWN MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RFP EXAMPLE**

Request for Proposals  
"Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan

City of Summer Skies  
Town of Autumn Nights

September, 2000

PREPARED BY:  
JOE SMITH  
CITY MANAGER,  
City of Summer Skies, Seasons County, Wisconsin

CITY AND TOWN  
2001 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROJECT

#### **Project Description**

*Introduction.* The City of Summer Skies ("City") and the Town of Autumn Nights ("Town"), located in Seasons County, Wisconsin, have determined that it is their best interest to enter into a multi-jurisdictional or joint comprehensive planning project (see Exhibit 1, Map of the Study Area). Construction of the long-anticipated U. S. Highway 1000 Bypass is expected to begin in 2003. Although the entire length of the bypass corridor is located within the Town, the transportation, land use and economic impacts of the bypass will affect both the City and the Town. Both Town and City hope to anticipate these impacts with the completion of a new Comprehensive Plan that conforms to new State regulations found in s. 66.1001, Stats..

The City and Town are recipients of a Comprehensive Planning Grant issued by the State of Wisconsin resulting from the adoption of 1999 Wisconsin Act 9, the new "Comprehensive Planning" legislation. Of the grant applications that received funding, the City and Town's application is one of few in which adjacent municipalities have jointly entered into a planning process. This project represents a unique opportunity to create one of the first true multi-jurisdictional "smart growth" comprehensive plans in the State of Wisconsin.

*Issuing Agencies.* This Request for proposals (RFP) is being issued by the City of Summer Skies on behalf of the Board of Supervisors of the Town of Autumn Nights and the Common Council of the City of Summer Skies. The firm selected for the project will contract with both the City and Town and will be responsible to the Town Board and the Common Council for the completion of the work described herein.

## **Overview**

The City of Summer Skies has a population of just over 10,000 and is the home of the University of Wisconsin–Summer Skies. Besides the University, the major employers in the area include the Summer Skies School District, the hospital, high-tech industries such as avionics computing, newspaper publishing and distribution, plus several others. The City has an active and successful industrial recruitment and retention program, with a nearly-full industrial park and 76 acres on which to expand. Although the City serves as a regional retail service center, it is heavily influenced by the proximity of Metropolitan City, only 25 miles away. Population growth has been slow, but steady. New industrial expansion, a wave of University faculty retirements in the next few years as well as the impending construction of the U. S. 1000 Bypass are expected to fuel new growth.

The Town completely surrounds the City and has a population of just over 1,300. The majority of the land is in agricultural production, but some areas on the fringe of the City have developed with large-lot single family homes. There is some commercial development along the major highways near the entrances to the City. Large-lot residential growth, especially north of the City, has been unplanned and haphazard. The growth expected from the impending bypass will also impact the Town. The Bypass will impact local and agricultural traffic patterns. Growth near the proposed highway interchanges and intersections as well as annexation pressures are some major Town concerns.

## **General Scope of Work**

General Requirements. The Town and City wish to rely on the experience and expertise of the consultant in creating a plan that not only conforms to the State statute, but also considers the unique needs of the Town and City. It is expected that the consultant will, while observing City and Town's unique needs and concerns, offer additional advice and expertise regarding programs, planning initiatives, etc. that will help the Town and City improve its quality of life. We expect to retain a consultant with a proven track record in comprehensive planning who can provide new ideas that supplement the experience and expertise of the Town's and City's staff.

The City and Town desire to complete a Comprehensive Plan process that maximizes the participation of citizens and other affected parties. The project must begin with the drafting by the consultant and adoption by the Town and the City a plan for public participation, in accordance with Section 66.1001 (4)(a), Stats.. It is of great importance to both City and Town that the plan finally adopted enjoys wide public support. Therefore, the public participation programs submitted by responding firms will be a major consideration of the Town and City when reviewing proposals. The City and Town wish to hire a firm that will employ imaginative and innovative means for public participation in the planning process, including the use of various media as well as the Internet.

Comprehensive Plan Elements. In conformance with the statute, each of the nine elements must be consistent with one another. The plan must include the following elements, in accordance with State statute: Issues and Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Intergovernmental Cooperation (this element should specifically address the joint operation of the plan by the two separate municipalities); Land Use; Implementation.

Since the City and Town are recipients of a comprehensive planning grant, the resulting plan is expected to be reviewed by the Office of Land Information Services for compliance with the grant objectives. Therefore, conformance with the definition of a comprehensive plan and its nine elements as outlined in the statute is of paramount importance.

Attached as Exhibit 2 is the narrative section of the City's and Town's grant application for the Planning Grant. This document outlines the basic expectations of the grant. Also attached is Exhibit 3, the City and Town's contract with the State for the Comprehensive Planning Grant. The contract includes the general budget for completing the plan in accordance with the grant award. The selected firm will be required to account for all activities and expenditures related to the grant award separately from the remainder of the plan costs.

**Other Project Elements.** In addition to the required nine elements, the planning process shall, at minimum, include the following: Development and implementation of the public participation plan; Review of local, State, County and Regional Planning Commission plans affecting the study area; Review of existing land use and development ordinances and recommended changes to bring them into conformance with the new Comprehensive Plan; Recommendations regarding adoption by the Town of Autumn Nights of any land use control ordinances (Developing such an ordinance is not part of the scope of this project.); Attendance at meetings with staff and the public; Development of a plan adoption ordinance; Assistance with the City in administration, accounting and reporting related to the Comprehensive Planning Grant.

At minimum, deliverables will include: 10 copies of the recommended draft plan and 20 Final copies of the adopted plan; Transportation, land-use, public facilities, environmental and other maps in both paper and electronic formats suitable for use in the City's CAD and GIS systems AutoCAD and ArcView) and publication on the World Wide Web. The consultant will also be responsible for delivery of draft and final copies to the distribution list noted in s. 66.1001(4), Stats..

### **Project Budget**

**Budget Sources.** The funds to complete this project come from three sources: the State of Wisconsin, the City of Summer Skies and the Town of Autumn Nights. The Town and City have received a grant of \$\_\_\_\_, matched by \$\_\_\_\_\_ from the City and \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the town, to complete the plan within the grant award.

An additional \$\_\_\_\_\_ is expected to be budgeted to complete the implementation tools of the Comprehensive Plan: \$\_\_\_\_\_ from the Town and \$\_\_\_\_\_ from the City. The total two-year budget for completing this plan is not-to-exceed \$70,000.00 (lump sum contract).

### **Timing**

The State funds will be available in 2001 and will be reimbursed to the Town and City on a quarterly basis. Town and City matching funds for the Transportation element have been budgeted for 2000 and will be carried over to 2001. In addition, \$\_\_\_\_ from the Town and \$\_\_\_\_\_ from the City for completing the implementation tools will be budgeted for 2001. The remaining \$\_\_\_\_ Town/\$\_\_\_\_\_ City to complete the plan will be available in 2002.

The project will be evaluated, with the consultant's participation, at the end of 2001 to determine if budget goals are being met. Adjustments to the overall budget may be recommended at that time.

### **Proposal Format**

Requirements. The Town and City request that firms responding to this RFP present a scope of services that achieves the project objectives listed in the previous sections. To accomplish this, information supplied in a proposal should include (at minimum) the following:

A statement of your firm's understanding of the City's and Town's comprehensive planning needs, based on the project objectives cited. Your proposed approach to the project, including a detailed work program in narrative form, divided into the nine individual task elements required by State statute. Each of the elements shall be further divided into subtasks (as necessary), designed to achieve the statutory requirements of each element. Graphics illustrating the proposed work program are encouraged. This work program will be the basis of the detailed Scope of Services Contract finally negotiated with the selected consultant.

Your proposed public participation approach. The City and Town desire an imaginative use of various media, including the Internet, for this purpose. Please describe methods proposed for public discussion, group decision making, public hearings, dissemination of information, etc.

A description of the firm's specialized experience in municipal comprehensive planning for both incorporated cities and unincorporated towns, particularly in Wisconsin. The City and Town are especially interested in any joint city/town plans previously completed by the proposing firms. Please include graphic and written samples of such work, as well as contact information for reference purposes.

A description of the firm's experience in municipal projects that are wholly or partially State funded, including grant administration, accounting and reporting. Please include contact information for reference purposes.

Resumes of professional staff members who will be assigned to the project, with a description of their particular responsibilities for this project.

Schedule. An estimated schedule for completing the project accompanied by a graphical timeline with each of the nine elements and additional project elements shown individually. Since this project is partially funded with a State grant, the entire plan must be completed no later than August 29, 2003. However, since the Town and City intend to budget for this project over the next two years, it is expected that the project will be completed before the end of calendar year 2002. The schedule should take into account the timing of funds as enumerated above.

Cost estimates. An estimated range of costs related to completing the project within the budget cited. *The proposal must note the total cost and costs assigned specifically to the comprehensive plan grant.* Respondents may wish to itemize the costs of each individual element. Include the standard hourly rate for the professionals working on the project, travel costs, costs of deliverables, etc.

If any responding firm wishes to subcontract any portion of this project, the above information should also be provided for the subcontractor(s).

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Characteristics. The City and Town seek consulting services from a firm that has demonstrated experience and expertise in comprehensive planning for jurisdictions similar to the Town of Autumn Nights and City of Summer Skies. The City and Town prefer to retain a firm whose major concentration is in the field of urban planning or who offer services in other areas (such as engineering, architecture, etc.) but who employ professional urban planners and offer planning as one of the firm's major services.

The City and Town also prefer to retain a firm located in the State of Wisconsin. Because of the unique nature of Wisconsin planning legislation, the firm should show strong knowledge of the new "smart growth" legislation as well as other aspects of Wisconsin planning law applicable to towns and cities.

Process. A joint City/Town review committee will be formed to evaluate the proposals. The Review Committee will meet at least twice to narrow the number of proposals to two or three finalists. The final recommendation of the Committee will be forwarded to the Town Board and the Common Council for final consideration.

The Committee may elect to conduct on-site interviews with the finalists before making a recommendation to the elected bodies. Firms invited for an interview will be given ample time to prepare.

### **Proposal and Selection Schedule**

A Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September \_\_, 2000 at 10:00 a.m. in the City Hall, 100 South Spring Street. Consulting firms attending this meeting will be provided with information that may assist in preparation of a work program as part of their proposal. City and Town officials will attempt to answer any questions at the meeting. Firms interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to attend.

### **Deadline**

Any firm interested in completing this project must submit eight (8) copies of the proposal to the Office of the City Manager of the City of Summer Skies by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October \_\_, 2000. Proposals received after that time will not be eligible for consideration. Proposals shall be directed to:

Joseph Smith  
City Manager, City of Summer Skies  
100 South Spring Street  
Summer Skies, Wisconsin 55555



**Decision**

The Joint Proposal Review Committee will meet the following week to evaluate the proposals. After the initial meeting, the Committee will narrow the selection down to the two or three best proposals. Interviews of the finalists (if desired by the Committee) will be held during the week of October \_\_\_\_\_. The Committee will then meet a final time to make its recommendation. The recommendation will be forwarded to the City's Common Council at their regular meeting on October \_\_, 2000 and to the Town Board of Supervisors at their regular meeting on November \_\_, 2000. The final contract and scope of services with the selected firm should be completed and executed around the beginning of December, 2000.

**Costs Incurred**

The City and Town shall not be liable for any costs incurred by a consultant in responding to this RFP or for any costs associated with discussions required for clarification of items related to this proposal.

**For Further Information**

Inquiries regarding this Request for Proposals should be directed to:

Joseph Smith  
City Manager, City of Summer Skies  
100 South Spring Street  
Summer Skies, Wisconsin 55555  
(\_\_\_\_) 555-5555 (voice)

## APPENDIX E

### SAMPLE WORKPLAN/TIMELINE

#### TOWN OF EAST YAHOO SMART GROWTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKPLAN/TIMELINE

The Comprehensive Plan Committee (or Plan Commission) will meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. at the Town Hall on County Q. Meetings with the consultant will occur in alternate months. The entire project runs 24 months. Additional monthly meetings may be scheduled to address special issues and/or additional public input. These are public meetings. Your attendance & participation is encouraged. **THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SCHEDULE!! KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE!!!**

DATE	TASK/TOPIC	OUTCOME/PRODUCT
Month 1	Organizational Meeting w/ Plan Committee ✓ Review planning process, establish roles of participants ✓ Town Board, Plan Commission, interested citizens attend	Finalized Workplan/Timeline
Month 3	Create draft vision & goals	Vision/Goals
Month 5	Resource Inventory & Analysis, <b>Meeting #1</b> ✓ Results/Implications of land & water resource analysis	Draft Text and Maps
Month 7	Community Planning Workshop ✓ Share results of planning to date - Invite public comments ✓ Town Board, neighboring communities invited	Public Participation
Month 9	Resource Inventory & Analysis, <b>Meeting #2</b> ✓ Population, Economic & Housing Characteristics & Trends ✓ Community Facilities and Services	Draft Text & Maps
Month 11	Resource Inventory & Analysis, <b>Meeting #3</b> ✓ Preliminary Land Use Inventory & Draft Text & Maps ✓ Land Use Analysis ✓ Transportation Analysis	Draft Text & Maps
Month 13	Community Planning Workshop ✓ Share results of planning to date - Invite public comments	Public Participation Update for Town Board
Month 15	Draft Plan & Initial Recommendations	Present draft plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Land Use Analysis, Plan &amp; Map</li> <li>✓ Implementation Recommendations</li> </ul>	
Month 17	Community Planning Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review entire plan including recommendations</li> <li>✓ Public Input; Draft Plan in public locations</li> </ul>	Public Participation Update for Town Board
Month 18	Plan Committee recommends draft plan for public hearing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Set timeline for plan public notice, public hearing (66.1001, Stats.)</li> </ul>	
Month 19	Public Hearing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Plan Committee takes final comments on plan</li> <li>✓ Sends plan on to Town Board w/ recommendation to adopt</li> </ul>	Public Participation
Month 21	Final Meeting of Comprehensive Plan Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Comprehensive Plan Adoption by Town Board</li> <li>✓ Action Planning Session - Begin Implementing Plan</li> </ul>	Plan Adoption Set Priorities for Action

## **APPENDIX F**

### **ELEMENTS OF A GOOD CONTRACT**

#### **FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SERVICES**

**Introduction** – In this section, the identities of the contracting parties are defined and simplified. Also, any appropriate resolutions of local government should be cited. Definitions used in the contract are presented. Includes a summary of core expectations for work to be completed under contract, e.g., that comprehensive plan will meet letter & spirit of Wisconsin statutes, that assistance preparing a Smart Growth grant application will be provided, etc.

**Scope of Proposed Services** – This section provides the details of the work to be done by the consultant, i.e., what aspects of the community's resource base and population will be analyzed and mapped, what sorts of recommendations will be made for future development and/or conservation of the community's resources, the number of meetings to be attended and/or facilitated by the consultant, etc. The scope of proposed services should be incorporated by reference into the contract, but the text of the scope should not be integrated into the contract text. At a minimum, the following items should be covered in the proposed scope of services:

- Inventory, analysis, mapping, goals, objectives and policies of the nine elements identified in s. 66.1001, Stats. that are required under the state's new definition of a comprehensive plan – issues & opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agricultural, natural and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation; land use, and implementation.
- A list of the technical support and professional roles to be played by the consultant including data collection and analysis; facilitation of and/or attendance at different meetings, workshops and processes; development of a public participation plan as defined under Wisconsin law; coordination with other jurisdictions; recommendations for potential changes in land use regulations to reflect the contents of the draft comprehensive plan; and any other relevant roles.
- Deliverables – This term refers to all the materials, maps, analysis models and other information created or used by the consultant in the process of producing the comprehensive plan. The number of copies of each item should be stated.

**Project Workplan/Timeline** – The Project Workplan/Timeline, often included in draft form in consultant proposals, provides a schedule for the content of meetings and the delivery of plan text, maps and other materials for the duration of the plan process. The final Project Workplan/Timeline should be negotiated by the community and the consultant in order to produce a work schedule that is satisfactory for both parties. Although the Workplan/Timeline can be incorporated into the contract by reference, the project partners should seek to balance “getting the work done” with the flexibility required to complete a complex planning process.

**Authorization, Progress & Completion** – The Authorization section of the contract ensures that the consultant may begin work upon receipt of a signed contract and that the

community will provide or facilitate the provision of all appropriate data and other information required for comprehensive planning to proceed. The parties should agree on how project Progress will be measured and how often progress reports will be required of the consultant, and what information will be contained in those reports. A final date for completion should be identified but, once again, underscoring the need for flexibility. The terms of what constitutes completion must be clearly spelled out.

**Compensation** – Most municipalities, appropriately, link compensation to project progress. Progress reports from the consultant may be detailed, e.g., number of hours worked in the last month by each staff member involved in the local planning project. Or, the consultant may provide a more general summary of labor, materials and incidental project costs. A community should require the level of detail that local staff can interpret and will use. The contracting parties can agree to 1) a *lump sum compensation program* in which community pays the consultant for specific planning services and materials at fixed prices or 2) a *time-based compensation program* involving pre-established salary and overhead rates, and reimbursable items which are then applied as the project proceeds. The time-based approach is generally thought to be more effective as a project management tool for planning.

**Responsibility of Consultant** – This section should specify the professional planning, mapping and other technical services that the consultant is providing under contract, with particular reference to the consultant's responsibilities for project and staff management. The language in some planning contract language suggests or states that consulting planners are to be held responsible for the actual adoption of the plan by a given community, and/or for successful plan implementation. Too many factors are involved in plan adoption and implementation to reasonably hold the consultant responsible; additionally, most consultants would not sign a contract containing such language.

**Miscellaneous Provisions** – Other items that in a standard contract include:

- A description of the community's requirements for *consultant insurance coverage* for comprehensive and public liability insurance, property damage insurance, etc.;
- Municipal expectations for *professional planning & consulting standards*;
- Public ownership of data, text, maps and other materials developed during the planning project;
- Requirement that *only consultant employees and qualified sub-contractors* will provide services under the terms of the contract;
- Limitations on the *assignment, i.e., transfer of responsibility, of contract items to another party*;
- *Integration of the elements of the contract with attachments*, such as scope of services and project workplan/timeline; and
- Agreed upon standards and "triggers" for the suspension and termination of work under contract, and dispute resolution procedures.

## APPENDIX G

### SCORE SHEET FOR REVIEWING CONSULTANT PROPOSALS

<b>TOWN OF</b> _____					
<b>SCORE SHEET FOR REVIEWING CONSULTANT PROPOSALS</b>					
<p><i>NOTE: Town officials should avoid using this score sheet as an accounting exercise. Rather, scores should be used as the basis for an informed discussion &amp; decision. Step 1: Score, discuss &amp; evaluate all proposals without looking at any estimated costs. Rank the proposals received in order of best, 2nd best, etc. Step 2: open the envelopes containing estimated costs for each proposal. Compare costs with ranking by Quality Indicators.</i></p>					
	Consultant 1	Consultant 2	Consultant 3	Consultant 4	Consultant 5
<b>AGENCY NAME:</b>					
<b>QUALITY INDICATORS:</b>					
FIRM QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE					
STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE					
STAFF AVAILABILITY FOR PROJECT					
CONFLICT OF INTEREST/LITIGATION					
SCOPE OF SERVICES					
* Public Participation					
* Smart Growth Requirements					
* Plan Content					
* Plan Process					
* Creativity					
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION					
PROJECT START DATE					
PROJECT TIMELINE/WORKPLAN					
PLANNING & MAPPING PRODUCTS					
UNDERSTANDING REGARDING DATA					
OTHER – Rural town planning experience					
OTHER – Working with quarries, billboards, etc.					
QUALITY OF PRESENTATION					
ORGANIZATION OF MATERIAL					
OVERALL IMPRESSION					
SUBCONSULTANTS USED					
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>EST. COST OF PLANNING SERVICES</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>RATING:</b> 0 = Not Applicable 1 = Poor 2 = Adequate 3 = Good 4 = Excellent					



